

man who manipulates the camera controls, who is responsible for the intermediate photographic processes? The man who establishes the viewpoint of the camera? One viewpoint out of many possible? He is the man who has to make this decision. And many other decisions. And by those decisions we judge him.

He makes his decisions according to what he knows. And in judging his decision we are judging his whole experience, not so much with the camera as with life itself. He may be a rank beginner with the camera, yet if he succeeds in conveying to us a fresh look at the world around us—he has done an important thing.

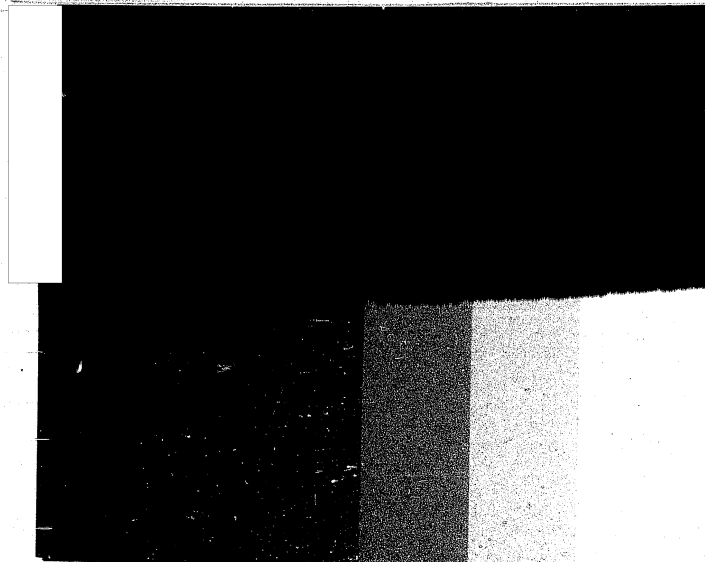
After all, what is a photographer? Someone who makes photographs not with a retoucher's brush and knife, but with a camera. Why does he make photographs? Because he wants to show us something we cannot get around to seeing for ourselves. And because he wants to show it to us *the way he saw it*. We call a photographer good, when he shows us something that interests us or attracts our attention. That may be a locomotive, if we are railroad hobbyists, or races, if we are fond of the track, or chorus girls, new roads, steam shovels, sewage disposal plants, billboards, sharecroppers or soldiers in action. Interests of the human being are great and varied, and the variety of these interests is what gives photography its significance.

Photography, considered as a means to record a mere likeness, is not very difficult. But photography as a new method in the age-old struggle of the human being to

whether the subject is a single person or a large group, a city block or a whole region of the country. It is necessary to understand people, how and where they live, what they do at work or at their leisure, what they have done to their environment, and what that environment has done to them.

If the subject is small in scale, understanding may be derived at first hand, from direct observation. If large, observations of others, the economic geographer, the historian, the sociologist—must be called upon. The photographer should allow no limitations to restrict his research, except that of time. In no other way will his work stand out under a test of time. Mere technical excellence can be equalled and surpassed by others almost overnight, but work based upon knowledge and understanding of the subject and of the world surrounding it will always have an honored place, not only in photographic exhibition, but whenever things of interest to people are sought. The photographer speaks through his camera, and the importance of what he has to say is limited only by his ability to express himself in terms of the language of photography and his own knowledge of the world. His task, difficult but rewarding, is to live up to the full possibilities of his medium.

However, only those who master the mechanics of photography can afford to "forget it." Mastery of the mechanics of photography is, at best, only a means to an end. Idolatry of photographic technique has never produced its masterpieces. Neither has the ability to draw



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